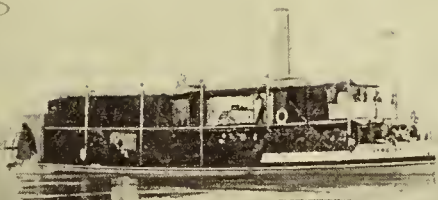


Pam-Africa
Congo

Vass L. C. 105



THE S. S. "SAMUEL N. LAPSLEY"



HE steamer "Lapsley," now plying the great Congo and Kassai Rivers, is the second steamer of this name that the children of the Southern Presbyterian Church have given to our Congo mission.

THE FIRST "LAPSLEY"

The first "Lapsley" was built in Richmond, Va. After being taken to pieces it was packed and shipped to the Congo. Here it was received and reconstructed by Rev. L. C. Vass at a final cost of \$16,000. Leopoldville, where this work was done, is the terminus of the Congo Railway, 250 miles long, which connects the lower with the upper river around the great cataracts of the Congo. From this point, which is the beginning of the navigation of the upper river, there are 6,000 miles of navigable waters for steamers of light draught.

THE LOSS OF THE FIRST "LAPSLEY"

The first boat never came up to our expectation. She was too small for the great currents of the Congo, and badly proportioned for proper stability, being 80 feet long by 12 foot beam and drawing 18 inches

of water. After three years of precarious service the steamer was wrecked by being capsized in the whirling currents of the main river just below the mouth of the Kassai. Rev. Henry Slaymaker, of Alexandria, Va., who was just going out to take charge of the business affairs of the mission was drowned with 23 natives. Rev. Motte Martin and Rev. L. C. Vass, with about thirty natives, were saved. The wrecked boat, after drifting for five miles bottom upwards, grounded on a sand bar near the shore. It was salvaged with the assistance of a government steamer, and sold for \$5,000 to a Portuguese trader. This amount was put into the new "Lapsley."

THE SECOND "LAPSLEY"

The new "Lapsley" was built in Scotland on the famous river Clyde, probably the most noted ship

Water Front, Leopoldville



building center in the world. After it was tested under its own steam on the Clyde, it was cut down, packed in cases and crates, and shipped by steamer to Matadi, the port of entry of the Congo, and from that point by rail around the cataracts to Leopoldville, where it was reconstructed by Messrs. Scott and Vass. The boat completed on the Congo and ready for her 900 mile run to Luebo had cost about \$45,000.

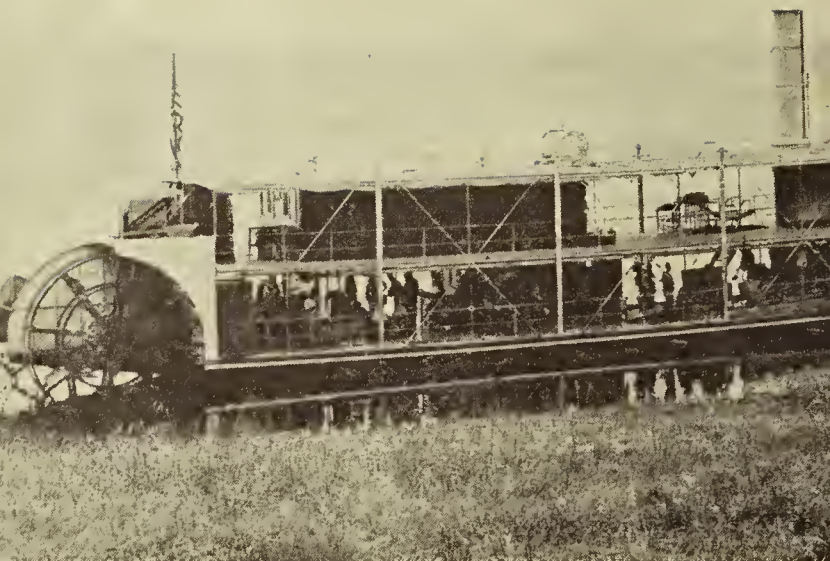
DESCRIPTION

The new "Lapsley" is a stern wheel steamer with compound noncondensing engines of 250 horse power that give her a speed of nearly eleven miles an hour. She is 105 feet in length, 19 feet beam and $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet draught when loaded with about 40 tons of cargo. She has two decks. On the upper one is the captain's cabin, situated well forward. There are also two cabins for passengers, a large dining saloon, which is also used for sleeping purposes when needed, and a bath room with running water. On the lower deck, besides the boiler and engines, is a cabin for the native engineer, galley, pantry, store room, and tool house.

There is also crowded on this deck the entire crew of 60 or more natives, with all their belongings, including many chickens and goats that they are taking down the river to sell. So large a crew is made necessary on account of the fact that besides the usual force needed on a river steamer as firemen, engine boys, steersmen, deck hands, cook and cabin boys, we carry 40 or more boys to cut wood.

STEAMER ROUTINE

About five o'clock in the afternoon the steamer ties up for the night at a suitable place near the edge of some forested bank. Late into the night



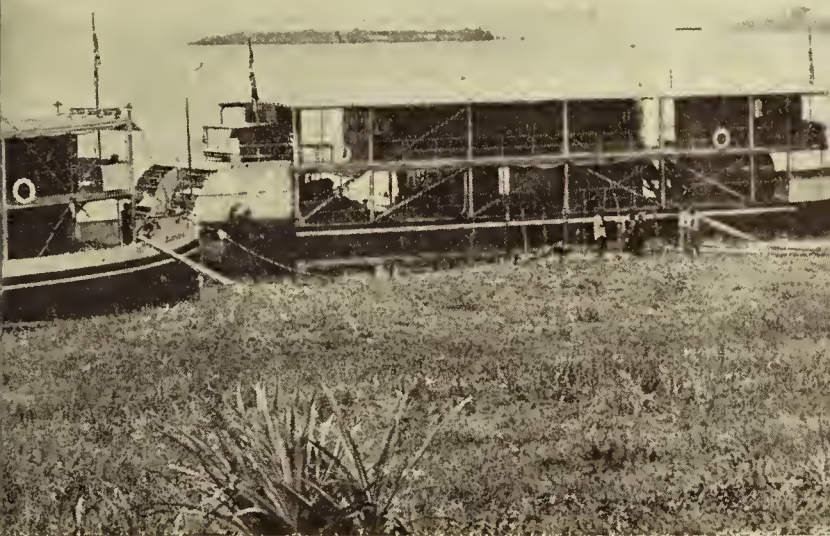
"Lapsley"

Stanley

you can hear the sound of the axes of the busy workers as they chop away on the dead wood that they have collected from the forests before night has caught them. Occasionally you can hear the far away cry of some belated worker who in the dark forest has lost his way and is calling to get his bearings. All must be finished before 4:00 a. m., and the wood carefully stacked between the long row of sticks that the head man has put up. Each man has his separate place to fill, and the height of the pile of wood is indicated by a cord tied at the proper place along the whole line of sticks. It is not an uncommon thing for the whole crowd to conspire to lower the string while the captain is asleep and thus lighten their work.

LOADING WOOD

Loading this wood between 4 and 6 in the morning is a disagreeable procedure to workers and sleepers, for as it falls from the natives shoulders with a re-



1, Congo

"Endeavor"

sounding thud upon the iron deck of the steamer there is little likelihood of further sleep for the occupants of the upper deck. Then too there is many a fight started by a stick thrown carelessly upon the bare foot of a fellow worker.

UNDER STEAM

If there is no fog on the river the captain, after prayers with the crew, attempts to get under way as soon after the sun is up as is possible. The trials of navigating the broad and often shallow waters of the Kassai, threading the intricate and ever-changing channels between hidden sand bars, with every now and then the nerve-racking procedure of getting the steamer freed from a sand bank where she has stuck fast in spite of the utmost care to find the correct passage, all this must be left untold for fear of wearying with too much detail. Neither shall we attempt the impossible task of describing the blended emanation that is wafted on the gentle

breeze up the companion way from that ever interesting main deck, heated by the boiler and engine to about 100 degrees or more and crowded with sleeping natives, their chickens, goats, over-ripe hippo and dog meat brought from Luebo. If you wish to know more of this ask some of the newly arrived ladies their first experiences.

THE NEED FOR THE STEAMER

The "Lapsley's" presence is made necessary by the fact that all pantry supplies, as well as barter goods of cloth, salt, cowries (a small shell that passes as money with some tribes), iron roofing, and many other supplies have to be imported from Europe. Transportation facilities are inadequate and very uncertain and expensive. Sixty dollars a ton is the rate from Leopoldville to Luebo, a distance of about 900 miles. Before we had our own steamer the missionaries suffered greatly for lack of food and clothing which lay, sometimes for over a year at Leopoldville, all efforts of our representative being futile to have them carried up the river.

AS AN EVANGELISTIC AGENCY

There are great possibilities for evangelistic work with the steamer. Not, however, as many think, by preaching to the six or eight tribes along the route. These all have separate languages, and, until the mission has a force large enough to set apart workers to master these new tongues, the missionary on the steamer can do very little. However, amongst most of these tribes there are trading stations scattered along the river. The workmen at these stations are largely recruited from the Baluba and Lulua tribes, amongst whom our mission labors, and in whose language we have considerable literature. Many of

these workmen are Christians from the churches at Luebo and Ibanje.

THE NATIVE CHRISTIAN'S ZEAL

Most of these Christians show the old apostolic spirit in their zeal to "Go and preach the gospel." They carry on school work, and regularly assemble themselves together for worship. As the native quickly acquires the language of another tribe, these Christian boys are soon able to use the language of the tribe amongst whom they are temporarily living, and they are thus able to tell the message to many who come to the trading posts to sell their rubber and ivory.

THE MISSIONARIES' OVERSIGHT

The "Lapsley" enables the missionary to visit these scattered stations along the river, giving that

Ready for Launching, Leopoldville



counsel and encouragement to these young Christian missionaries which is so necessary. Also to keep them supplied with the necessary literature for the schools, and to examine and receive any into the church who are ready to be received. This is only a beginning of great possibilities in evangelistic work with the "Lapsley" along the river.

L. C. VASS.



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN MISSIONS
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT

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